

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13

AID-20 IGA-02 RSR-01 /119 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4901

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11068

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MASS, CG, TH

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR ANAND'S REMARKS ABOUT POSSIBLE

CHANGES IN THAI FOREIGN POLICY

SUMMARY: NSC SPECIAL ASSISTANT JOHN LEHMAN, PARTICIPATING IN A USIS ONGOING FOREIGN POLICY THEMATIC PROGRAM, MET INFORMALLY JULY 17 WITH MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY STAFF IN SIMILAR FASHION TO OTHER KEY LECTURERS VISITING HERE UNDER USIS SPONSORSHIP. AMBASSADOR ANAND PAYYARACHUN, ON TDY FROM WASHINGTON, UNEXPECTEDLY JOINED THE DISCUSSION WHICH DEVELOPED INTO A DIALOGUE BETWEEN HIM AND LEHMAN. ANAND PREDICTED POSSIBLE THAI FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES, SAYING IT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT FOR THE RTG TO EXPLAIN WHY THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND IS NOT MORE OF AN OBSTACLE THAN A NECESSITY TO THAI FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. ANAND EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE ABILITY OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO DELIVER ON ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID COMMITMENTS TO THAILAND. HE SAID "WE" HAVE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE SINCERITY OF THE U.S. COMMITMENT, BUT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE REASSURANCES SUCH AS LEHMAN WAS GIVING WITH THE MOOD OF THE SENATE, AND THE IMBALANCE BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGIS-

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LATIVE BRANCHES. ANAND EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM AT LEHMAN'S

ESTIMATE THAT THE SUBSTANTIVE EFFECTS OF THE WATERGATE AFFAIR WOULD BE ENDED BY SEPTEMBER.

2. ANAND SAID THAT IMPORTANT DOMESTIC FACTORS AFFECT THE RTG ABILITY TO MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT FOREIGN POLICY. IN VIEW OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE RISING COSTS OF LIVING AND STUDENT DEMANDS, SAID ANAND, THE RTG WILL HAVE TO UNDERTAKE "MORE IMAGINATIVE MEASURES" IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS TO BOLSTER POPULAR CONFIDENCE IN ITS COMPETENCE TO GOVERN. IF THOSE MEASURES DO NOT SUCCEED, HE SAID, RTG FOREIGN POLICY WILL BE "IN SERIOUS TROUBLE" BECAUSE THE ELITE GROUP WHICH IS INTERESTED IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS WILL BE ABLE TO SEIZE ON POPULAR DISCONTENT TO AGITATE FOR FOREIGN POLICY CHANGES. ANAND SAID IT IS ALREADY DIFFICULT, AND BECOMING MORE SO, FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO EXPLAIN WHY THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN THAILAND IS NOT MORE OF AN OBSTACLE THAN A NECESSITY TO THAI FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS.

3. ANAND ASKED LEHMAN WHETHER HE EXPECTED A DECREASE IN THE NUMBER OF THAI BASES TO BE USED BY THE U.S. LEHMAN RESPONDED THAT HE WOULD EXPECT A DRAWDOWN IN FORCE LEVELS, BUT THAT HE WAS NOT COMPETENT TO DISCUSS HOW REMAINING FORCES WOULD BE DEPLOYED; HE EMPHASIZED THAT HE DID NOT ENVISION A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL.

4. COMMENT: ANAND HAS RETURNED TO THAILAND OSTENSIBLY TO VISIT AN EXTREMELY SICK FATHER. WE SUSPECT THAT AN EQUAL PRIORITY MIGHT BE A REEVALUATION OF THE U.S.-THAI SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP IN VIEW OF REDUCED AID LEVELS AND THE AUGUST 15 SCHEDULED DATE FOR CESSATION OF BOMBING IN CAMBODIA. THE VIEWS THAT ANAND EXPRESSED TO LEHMAN ARE SYMPTOMATIC OF THINKING AMONG KEY FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS ABOUT THE NECESSITY FOR A CHANGE IN THE U.S.-THAI RELATIONSHIP, ALTHOUGH THESE OFFICIALS CONTINUE TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT MOVING TOWARD A MORE "NORMAL" RELATIONSHIP NOW WILL REDUCE PRESSURES ON THE GOVERNMENT TO ELIMINATE COMPLETELY OUR SPECIAL TIES.

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